

# FIGHT BACK AGAINST BRUTAL BOSSES

## Defend jobs and services - nationalise P&O!

**ROB WILLIAMS**  
SOCIALIST PARTY INDUSTRIAL ORGANISER

**T**he cold brutality of the bosses was shown by P&O Ferries on 17 March when it sacked 800 employees by Zoom. Even more so, security was primed, with some acting as if they had powers of arrest.

In those brutal minutes, the entire façade of 'national unity' that Boris Johnson has been assembling over the Ukraine war, as with Covid, with the full backing of New Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer - was ripped down and shown to be the sham it is.

So too has the so-called concern of Tory ministers after it was revealed that the government was tipped off about the plans of P&O and its parent company DP World. Tory Dover MP Natalie Elphicke joined protests, but was rightly heckled because last autumn she refused to vote in parliament against 'fire and rehire'.

Trade union members have rallied to the cause of the workers and their union, the RMT, on the dockside in Dover, and again in the days after at solidarity rallies and protests in Hull, Larne, Liverpool, Dover and London.

▶▶▶ CONTINUED ON PAGES 2-3

## Victory to the Coventry bin workers!

**COVENTRY SOCIALIST PARTY**

**T**he long-running bin drivers' dispute in Coventry has a stark warning for local authority workers across the country.

Like P&O, Coventry's 'Labour' Council has attacked its workers who are struggling for a living wage. All that's missing are the black masks and sets of handcuffs!

The council has organised an 'alternative workforce' to try and break the strike, using an arms-length company to do so, something other local authorities will be eager to exploit if Coventry Council gets away with it. It has suspended a senior union rep in a blatant act of trade union victimisation, and even talked in the media about derecognising Unite the Union.

This is nothing other than attempted union busting by trying to do to the drivers what they intend to do to all the workers. They want to defeat a well-organised section of workers as an example to all. The council has actually said it wouldn't pay the drivers because then it would have to pay other workers.

That is why this is a dispute for all workers, and why a victory for the drivers will be a victory for all.

Farcically, the council has spent around £3 million fighting the drivers, when just £300,000 would settle the dispute. This from a council which has the money to pay off one former senior officer with a package of around half a million pounds!

More and more workers are organising to fight to defend their living standards in this cost-of-living crisis. And the bosses are launching a counteroffensive and trying to get their retaliation in first.

This attack, and all the others, must be met by the full force of the trade union movement mobilising to defend its members' living standards, jobs and rights at work. We say to Coventry Council: reinstate Pete Randle and pay up!

Several Coventry HGV drivers have joined the Socialist Party - why don't you join too?

- Visit [socialistparty.org.uk/join](http://socialistparty.org.uk/join)
- Join strikers' protest at 11am on 26 March at Broadgate, Coventry



PHOTOS: PAUL MATTSSON, NICK CHAFFEY, COVENTRY SP

# DEFEND JOBS AND SERVICES - NATIONALISE P&O!

## TUC must call emergency solidarity demonstration to demand 'seize the ships'

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Among those who marched in Dover were some who remembered the year-long strike by the National Union of Seamen (NUS), now a part of the RMT, 34 years ago, when over 2,000 ferry workers were sacked.

That dispute was defeated, despite tremendous support and solidarity from rank-and-file trade unionists, because the workers and the NUS were isolated. This can't happen now.

In the first Covid summer of 2020, the likes of British Airways rolled out 'fire and rehire' and were shamefully joined by the Blairite Labour council of Tower Hamlets. And now their Coventry counterparts are spending millions trying to defeat striking bin workers.

During lockdown, many companies saw the opportunity to use this brutal method to attack workers' pay, terms and conditions. British Gas workers took 43 days of strike action, but still faced cuts in their income of over £10,000. Those who didn't sign new contracts were made redundant. Car transporters were sent round to pick up the British Gas vans. Behind each one was a worker and their family.

But the viciousness of P&O has

been on another level. There wasn't even a consultation period, just a prepared assault on these workers. They have to be defended.

Fire and rehire became a wave, as the bosses picked up the baton from the likes of British Airways. Unite has estimated that one in ten of its members have been affected by it. P&O might try to argue that UK employment law doesn't apply, as these are maritime workers, but this cannot be accepted, and whatever is the case, many other employers will now be looking to see if P&O get away with it.

Many workers will see that this is the regime that could be in place when the new tranche of 'freeports' is brought in by Boris Johnson, opening the door to more trampling of workers' contracts and national agreements.

### Bosses' profits

The balance of forces has tilted slightly in some sectors, as the economy has recovered from the pandemic lockdowns. Labour and skills shortages, along with strained supply lines, have meant that some groups of workers such as HGV drivers have been able to win significant pay rises, on condition that they have been organised and willing to take action.

But this is a reminder that when their profits are at stake, the bosses will use the most brutal methods.

This was virtually admitted by the company, citing alleged losses. Yet just this month DP World has announced that it made profits of \$896 million (£751 million) in 2021, up from \$846 million in 2020. It has also backed a £147 million deal to sponsor European Golf, when there is a hole in the P&O workers' pension fund of £146 million!

But how much profit P&O makes must not decide what happens to workers, their families and communities. It merely shows that it can't be trusted to run these services. P&O must be nationalised and brought into public ownership, under democratic workers' control and management.

The Tory government has taken emergency action against Russian oligarchs by imposing sanctions and has threatened to seize their properties. But the P&O sackings show that employers, backed by their Tory government, are also capable of acting in a dictatorial fashion.

Correctly, workers shouted "seize the ships" on the Dover protest. But no trust can be placed in Johnson's government. However, it can be forced under pressure to act. This poses the need for a massive movement that must be built to support the sacked workers, especially drawing in other workers in transport, haulage and the docks.

Many of these workers have themselves been in dispute recently, and the RMT has launched strikes on London Underground against Tory cuts administered by Blairite Labour mayor Sadiq Khan. The RMT is also being forced to prepare action nationally because of similar attacks by Network Rail and the train operating companies.

Such is the widespread anger, there is real potential to mobilise workers in solidarity. Already it is being reported that some of the agency staff who were lined up to take the P&O workers' jobs have refused.

The Trades Union Congress has finally called a national demo in June against the cost of living squeeze and the Tory and employers' pay freezes and wage cuts. But now is the moment. Whether it's in central London or at one of the ferry ports, such a mobilisation is needed and can be the platform for a victory.

Socialist Party (then Militant) poster from the 1988 National Union of Seamen strike, below



## £554m

Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum, billionaire ruler of Dubai, the state that ultimately owns P&O, could easily afford the £554 million a London court ordered him to pay his ex-wife in a high-profile divorce case last year



ROELHEMNES/CC

# Protesting and fighting back in Dover Port of Hull

Hundreds of trade unionists joined sacked P&O workers on 18 March outside the Dover RMT union offices and chanted "seize the ships!" A march to the docks followed, with passing motorists and lorry drivers tooting in support, in recognition of the vital nature of this battle to Dover and other communities that rely on the employment of the ferry services run by P&O and others.

Workers on board P&O ships for over twenty years have been dumped with a worrying future in front of them. Rosie, a former P&O worker and RMT rep, explained this has been a long time coming: "P&O is a bad employer taking people on for the summer on zero-hour contracts, then, as soon as things quieten down, dump them for the winter. Its temporary work on low wages. The company left a black hole in the pension fund which they are now making seafarers pay for with their jobs."

Darren Proctor, RMT national secretary, speaking at the rally, outlined what's at stake: "If they can do this at P&O they can do it to anyone, no one is safe. This isn't just an RMT fight, this is a fight for every worker. These ships should be detained, they're our ships. The CEOs come and go but it's our workforce that keeps ships running. We have to fight. We are going to win. Our message is loud and clear, seize the ships!"

P&O's brutal action has huge ramifications. As Mick Lynch, RMT general secretary explained, the government has seized the assets of the Russian oligarchs, why not take the same action against the oligarchs at P&O and parent company DP World?

The Socialist Party made a clear call for nationalisation of P&O as the only way to secure jobs and ferry services on a permanent basis. This has to be linked to a mass mobilisation of the wider trade unions, a call made by Matt Wrack, general secretary of the FBUI, speaking at the rally in Dover, if the Johnson Tory government is going to be forced to act.

Labour leader Starmer's timid response to this vicious attack shows more than ever that workers need a party of their own to mobilise mass support effectively and offer a real alternative to capitalist crisis, job insecurity and the soaring cost of living.

NICK CHAFFEY SOUTHERN SOCIALIST PARTY



PHOTOS: NICK CHAFFEY



On 21 March I joined my friends and comrades in the RMT on a journey to London to protest our outrage at the appalling treatment of these workers by P&O and its owner, DP World.

The facts behind this outrage are beginning to surface, and the politicians from all sides are having to weigh in. Previous track records on maritime issues illustrate how empty the rhetoric proves.

The maritime sector has been relentlessly ground down, with many protections removed and offshore registration favoured.

From the eighties seafarers' strike to the present day, we have seen in Dover the hit to the economy. Where once there were thousands of ferry workers and associated jobs, we are now experiencing a further 'cull' by a powerful Middle Eastern multinational with a massive portfolio.

A strategy it proudly announced to shareholders - driving down the wages and terms and conditions as low as they can. This probably looks great on a spreadsheet, but here in Dover we see the real impact on families and their children facing a terrifying and uncertain future.

Paul and Kath met on board a ship, fell in love and married. A couple of years on, they decided, both being in 'secure' employment, to buy a house and start a family. Two kids on and with a mortgage to pay, they are now scared.

Sally is a single mum. As the only breadwinner, she pays for everything from her salary on the ship.

Davey did reasonably at school then went on to an apprenticeship with P&O - where lies his future?

The whole of the area is devastated by this news, but for the bigwigs and

politicos in Westminster, it's just another day in the office!

In Liverpool, Hull, Northern Ireland and here in Dover, we are not going away!

MIKE SARGENT RMT DOVER



The Socialist Party joined around 200 trade unionists in solidarity with P&O Ferries workers in Hull. We marched on the P&O terminal but were locked out! Hull Trades Council secretary Joe Gibbins called for the nationalisation of P&O, and the need for a new workers' party to fight

for such socialist policies. It was great to see delegations from the RMT, FBUI firefighters, GMB, and the 20 or so prison officers and POA members from Heddon Road prison who brought solidarity.

ALISTAIR TICE YORKSHIRE SOCIALIST PARTY

## £270m & £10m

The billionaires behind P&O received £270 million in dividends in the same year it claimed £10 million in furlough payments during the pandemic

# Port of Liverpool



Socialist Party members joined the protest at the Port of Liverpool on 18 March PHOTO: LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST PARTY

# London



Socialist Party members joined the RMT protests in London on 18 and 21 March outside the offices of DP World and at Westminster PHOTO: PAUL MATSSON



PHOTO: PAUL MATTISSON

## Tories axe emergency housing funding

### Councils must freeze rents and defy government cuts

PAUL KERSHAW  
SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBER AND CHAIR OF UNITE  
HOUSING BRANCH LE1111

Rents are rising at their fastest rate for five years. Over 200,000 private renters in Britain are in the process of being evicted, or face eviction, and that is before the battering they will get from increased energy bills. The property website Zoopla reports the average rent jumped 8.3% in the final three months of 2021.

The government response? Calously cutting the funding councils receive for 'discretionary housing payments' (DHPs) by £40million, leaving many fearing they will have to leave their homes.

Social renters are facing a rent increase of 4.1% across much of England, the maximum allowed. That can mean as much as £20 per month.

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive and some Scottish councils have frozen rents because of the cost-of-living crisis. There is nothing stopping Labour councils doing the

same. Nor is there anything stopping councils continuing to pay DHPs in defiance of the government.

Some Labour politicians have called for a government-enforced rent freeze. Good. But if they are serious about protecting working-class communities, they should start with the rents they set! Councils should pressure housing associations, which make fat profits for banks and financial institutions, to freeze rent too.

But it seems Labour councils are committed to continue doing the government's bidding.

In Croydon, campaigners say that the Housing Revenue Account starts the year with £27.6 million in reserves. They explain: "Struggling families need the cash more than the council does."

Socialist Party members standing in May's local elections, as part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition, agree! It's time for campaigning councillors prepared to use all the tools at their disposal to fight for working-class communities.

represent us, the sky is the limit for how much they can earn in second jobs. After the Owen Paterson lobbying scandal at the end of 2021, the Tories made promises for limits on second jobs. Now they have changed their tune. The government now describes such measures as 'impractical'.

A practical solution to political representatives divorced from the reality working-class people's lives, is for MPs to be paid a worker's wage, and not to benefit from any material privileges.

### The sky is the limit for MPs pay

MPs will get a pay rise from 1 April. Their MP salary will go up by £2,212 next year, and that's not counting any extras! They also get a place to stay in London provided for free, some even claim expenses despite already owning a home in capital!

For MPs, supposedly elected to

## Cost-of-living emergency - take the wealth off the super-rich



Protest against the cost of living in February PHOTO: PAUL MATTISSON

Thousands of households in Britain face financial catastrophe, and millions more face hardship. As the Socialist went to press, Chancellor Rishi Sunak was putting the finishing touches to his Spring statement.

In March 2020, when the Covid pandemic hit, the government let loose with unprecedented levels of spending to save their profit system. Now devastation faces working-class people's standard of living in a new unfolding crisis.

Far from funding the services we need, ahead of the statement Sunak

announced an increase... in the NHS 'savings' target - £4.75 billion will be taken from NHS budgets.

Sunak might go through with plans to cut fuel duty, but a 10p cut would only wipe out a quarter of the last year's petrol and diesel price rises.

The total cost of energy price rises in Britain to consumers is set to rise to as high as £43 billion. Labour's shadow chancellor Rachel Reeves has called for a one-off windfall tax on oil and gas producers. That measure would bring in £3.7 billion, barely touching the sides.

And what about all of the other companies that have made record profits throughout the pandemic? Billionaires' wealth increased by over 50% between March 2021 and January 2022.

Emergency measures are needed now. Not to save the bosses' profits, but to save our livelihoods. And the wealth must be seized from the super-rich to pay for it.

Below, Socialist Party members explain the effects of the crisis on our working-class communities, and what needs to be done to fight it.

### 'Wages won't cover rent'

The cost-of-living crisis means that my partner and I are unlikely to be able to find somewhere to rent together close to where we work in Manchester. It takes us both about an hour each way to commute and bus fares keep going up.

After leaving university we are encouraged to get jobs, in city centres, which pay less than £20,000 a year, or even unpaid internships! But the cost of living is so high that wages don't even come close to covering rent,

bills, council tax and food.

Manchester City Council has recently agreed to develop at least two new skyscrapers in the city centre, with over 1,500 flats being opened up, but only a tiny fraction are labelled 'affordable'. Who are these flats built for?

We say pay everyone a living wage, make flats and rented properties affordable, and end the erection of pointless, unaffordable buildings!

ZAKK BROWN  
MANCHESTER AND SALFORD SOCIALIST PARTY

### 'Multiple jobs to keep heads above water'

Rental properties targeted at students are all seeing a large spike in rent, some by as much as £30 a week. Several students I know had multiple gig economy jobs, even before this round of inflation, just to keep above water.

In York, students have to go as far as Hull to find a place to live. A wave of student rent strikes swept the country in 2020. But this squeeze

## 5%

of children will be thrown into absolute poverty between 2020-21 and 2022-23 (Resolution Foundation)

is by no means limited to students. The cost of rent has been increasing faster than real wages almost non-stop since 1980. The reason why is relatively simple, it is more profitable to make fewer expensive houses for the better off than more affordable houses for the working class.

Fortunately, the solution to the problem is actually quite simple! Government-built housing to house people rather than turn a profit.

ARTHUR FARR  
YORK SOCIALIST PARTY

## £1,000

Real household incomes are set to fall by 4%, or £1,000 in the year ahead (Resolution Foundation)

## Trade union action needed to fight the cost-of-living crisis

### TUC demo must be built as a step to wider action



### WHAT WE THINK

In this unstable world of soaring prices and low pay, war, Covid and climate disaster, one thing is certain: we cannot rely on capitalist politicians to take decisive action on our behalf.

In his Spring statement, multi-millionaire Rishi Sunak claimed to be doing what he can to help. Really his main aim is to keep big business making profits while economic crisis develops. But the Tories also weigh up the anger in society to work out what they can get away with.

That includes looking over their shoulders at Keir Starmer's Labour Party and the trade union leaders. What threat comes from that direction?

That is why the national demonstration called by the TUC for 18 June is important.

The Socialist Party has been demanding the TUC call a national demonstration for some time. There is enormous anger, expressed in the pay consultations of public sector union members and in localised strikes among HGV drivers and in schools.

A big national demonstration by the trade union movement, which organises six million workers, could have a galvanising effect, and should be a stepping stone towards coordinated national strike action. That's what happened when 750,000 people marched against austerity in March 2011 - that massive demo was followed by effectively a public sector general strike in November.

The national TUC demonstration that was supposed to take place in Blackpool on 19 March was never enough - called at short notice and difficult for much of the country to get to for 10am - but when it was cancelled, the Socialist Party demanded 'name the date' for a proper national demo.

#### Workers' pressure

Now, under pressure from workers, including the correct decision of the Blackpool trade union movement to go ahead with a demonstration (see page 10), the date for a national TUC protest has been named: 18 June in Parliament Square. It is vital that all the stops are pulled out to ensure that rather than simply a static gathering in the square, this is made into a big, successful demonstration.

The TUC should produce thousands of leaflets for each union to distribute to its branches so that every workplace has leaflets on its notice boards, desks and workbenches. Unions should call

workplace meetings in every area to plan how to mobilise, and organise subsidised transport to London. The TUC says there will be 'town hall meetings' around the country: we say, put the strikers from Coventry bins, P&O RMT members, victorious health strikers, and so on, on those platforms to help build momentum. This should be combined with immediate mass protests at the ports to demand nationalisation of P&O (see pages 2-3)

It must be made clear that this demonstration is not a one-off, but part of a campaign to build confidence and prepare for strike action. That is what will pile on the pressure.

The Socialist Party argues for a such action to win pay rises, and we put forward a socialist programme that would secure decent living conditions long-term: a programme of public investment, nationalisation of the major companies under democratic control, and socialist planning of the resources necessary to ensure a good life for all.

That also means the trade union movement taking responsibility for its own political voice. Starmer's Labour Party has no intention of nationalising vicious companies like P&O, or the energy companies to ensure cheap fuel. We have to take on the Tories but that means we also have to fight for a mass working-class party that will fight in the interests of working-class people.

### 'A political choice to allow ordinary people to pay for keeping profits high'

Fuel Allowance has made paying the bills easier, now it won't even touch the sides. One woman told me that she already goes out during the day to avoid having the heating on.

The cost-of-living crisis is about to push millions of people on the lower end of the pay scale into real poverty. The government wants to blame the war in Ukraine for rising costs in the hope that people will accept it out of solidarity with Ukrainians. We won't.

This cost-of-living crisis, including plans to raise the cap on energy costs, predates the Ukraine war. This is a political choice, to allow ordinary people to pay the price for keeping energy profits high.

At the moment, the thing I hear the most is that people are scared. For the last twenty years, the Winter

I currently work for a charity supporting older people with everything from financial advice to social engagement. In my day-to-day work life I work with hundreds of people trying to survive on state pensions.

At the moment, the thing I hear the most is that people are scared. For the last twenty years, the Winter

SIOBHAN FRIEL  
BIRMINGHAM SOUTH WEST SOCIALIST PARTY



Hundreds of thousands join the public sector strike in 2011

## We say:

### Price rises

- No rise in the energy price cap. Nationalise energy and other utilities under democratic workers' control and management to reduce bills by removing the profit motive
- Scrap the planned increase in public transport fares. Return transport into public hands, to guarantee a fully funded, free, environmentally friendly, sustainable transport system
- Stop price rises, end bosses' profiteering. Open the books of big retailers to inspection by trade unions. Nationalise the big retailers under democratic workers' control to be run to meet need, not for profit

### Pay, benefits, pensions

- An immediate above-inflation pay rise for workers to restore wages after over a decade of pay freezes and below-inflation rises
- Regular pay increases for all, linked to trade-union agreed measures of inflation
- Raise the minimum wage to £15 an hour, without exemptions
- Restore the pension triple lock
- Restore the additional £20-a-week Universal Credit payment. End the benefit cap.
- Living benefits and pensions for all who need them, rising with the cost of living

### Housing

- Freeze council and social housing rents
- Rent controls to cap rents - decided by elected bodies of tenants, housing workers and trade union representatives

### Make the rich pay, not the workers

- Scrap the planned rise in national insurance, freeze council tax, and scrap student debt
- No worker should be made to pay more tax, raise tax thresholds in-line with inflation
- Take the wealth off the super-rich, nationalise the top 150 companies and banks to be run under democratic working-class control and management, with compensation only on the basis of proven need

### New workers' party

- No trust in Starmer's Labour to fight in our interests. For a new mass workers' party based on trade union and workers' struggle

### Socialism

- End the chaos of the capitalist market. For a socialist plan of production, based on the need of the overwhelming majority, not for profit

## DWP announces office closures - prepare to defend our jobs and offices!

DAVE SEMPLE  
PCS BRANCH SECRETARY WIGAN  
(PERSONAL CAPACITY)

On 17 March, 43 offices across the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) were told that they are due to close.

Of these 43, thirteen sites have been told that the work they currently undertake is not going to be moved to an office nearby. This means that without a major union campaign to stop the office closures and defend jobs, redundancies are almost certain.

The remaining 30 sites have been told that their work will move to somewhere nearby. Senior managers making the announcements across DWP made reassuring noises, to avoid upsetting staff. But no-one is fooled.

The fact is that communities face loss of local services. Many members will face lengthier and more expensive journeys to work. For a number, especially those with carer responsibilities, the journey to a new location will not be possible.

In addition to the effect on those directly affected by office closures, there are major doubts about the availability of space to absorb transfers of staff and work on this scale at existing locations.

The Public and Commercial Services (PCS) union leadership in the DWP group had advance warning of the closures. The union's Group Executive Committee (GEC) met on 15 March to discuss the list of closures. Shamefully, the Left Unity majority GEC did not prepare branches for the announcement.

They also did not issue a clear call

to oppose all the office closures and redundancies. They gave no lead whatsoever. The message should be absolutely clear - no office closures, defend jobs and no redundancies.

At the Group Executive Committee meeting, Socialist Party members and other Broad Left Network supporters immediately proposed a major campaign, including an all-members ballot across DWP that takes in the issues members care about: pay, jobs and office closures. The majority voted this down.

The current Left Unity leadership has failed members on safety, on pay, and now on jobs and offices. This is why Socialist Party members, and other socialist union reps in the Broad Left Network, are standing against the current Left Unity majority in the 2022 union elections (see below).



## PCS elections: Increased support for the Broad Left Network

KATRINE WILLIAMS  
PCS MEMBER

Nominations for the 2022 PCS union president and national executive elections closed on 10 March. Details of branch nominations have not been published, and these show increased support for the Broad Left Network - the left rank-and-file group supported by Socialist Party members.

The Broad Left Network presidential candidate, Socialist Party member Marion Lloyd, received 45 nominations from all parts of the union. Incumbent president Fran Heathcote received 60 nominations, and the other candidate Bev Laidlaw 16.

The 45 nominations secured by Marion Lloyd this year is an increase on her 2021 total of 42. This contrasts with the 2021 nominations for her opponents which have gone down. The substantially reduced nominations for Heathcote shows the current Left

Unity leadership is increasingly seen as a failure - having mounted no serious challenge to government attacks on PCS members. The reduced support for the third candidate, Laidlaw shows the Independent Left group she represents is not regarded as a serious alternative.

In terms of the number and spread across the union's membership groups, it is clear from her nominations that Marion Lloyd is the candidate best placed to challenge Heathcote in this election.

It is also clear that Marion's increased nominations reflect a mood in the union for a fresh approach: for a leadership that gives members the confidence and the means to fight on the issues that matter to them. This is more important than ever as rising prices generally, and energy price increases in particular, tear huge holes in our household budgets.

The current leadership, faced with Tory attacks on our pay, "parked"

in their words, the 2020 pay claim. They went on to tell the Tories that a way round their pay freeze could be found by selling conditions for pay. We can't afford another year of this leadership.

We call upon activists to unite behind Marion's candidacy and the full Broad Left Network slate for a union democratically controlled through its elected lay structures. A leadership which will actively coordinate across the union our fight on Covid-19 safety, pay, jobs, pensions and office closures. A leadership which will work to build public sector union opposition to the Tory attacks.

The PCS postal ballot for president and national executive opens Thursday 21 April and closes Thursday 12 May.

Support Marion Lloyd for PCS president. Support the Broad Left Network candidates for the PCS national executive. For more information see pcsbn.wordpress.com.

## 'Reinstate Max' week of action from Plymouth to Dundee



SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS IN USDAW

Usdaw shop workers' union members and other trade unionists took to the streets from 12-19 March to leaflet Tesco customers and workers about the victimisation of Usdaw Tesco distribution shop steward Max McGee.

Max was victimised for just doing his duty as a trade unionist and socialist, not just standing up for workers in his distribution centre, but also for refusing to accept perks from management in an attempt to soften the attempts of the bosses to stop workers' strength defending terms, conditions and safety.

Max has exhausted all internal appeal options within the company to keep his job and position as rep and branch secretary. Early conciliation has been tried through ACAS and was unsuccessful. However, Max is still waiting to hear whether Usdaw itself will take the Employment Tribunal case, some months after this was lodged.

It is vital when trade union reps are attacked that the union pulls out every stop to support them. Usdaw has lost over 50,000 members in the last few years, a trend that could increase if reps are allowed to be picked off one by one, leading to members losing confidence in the ability of the

union to defend them.

The week of action was important in showing Tesco that there is support for Max among Usdaw members and the wider trade union movement, and the expectation that Usdaw should fully back Max.

Max is happy to speak at any trades council and union branch meetings to raise awareness and funds for his reinstatement campaign. During the week, Max spoke at Walsall TUC, which organised one of the protests, with them making a donation towards the campaign. More donations can be made at [gofundme.com/f/reinstate-max-usdaw-rep-socialist](https://gofundme.com/f/reinstate-max-usdaw-rep-socialist).

Protests took place outside Tesco HQ in Welwyn Garden City, by the National Shop Stewards Network and Stevenage TUC, and in Leeds, Walsall, Wakefield, Bedworth, Hackney, Plymouth, York, Glasgow, and Dundee. There was also support from Nipsa strikers in Northern Ireland, and from protesters outside the Tory party conference, organised by Blackpool TUC.

With Usdaw's Annual Delegate Meeting fast approaching, Usdaw should cancel the social evening organised by Tesco for reps that takes place there, as part of a campaign of exerting pressure on Tesco until Max is reinstated, including fully taking on the Employment Tribunal case.

## Just Eat strike gains momentum and spreads around the country

IAIN DALTON  
LEEDS SOCIALIST PARTY

Over the past few weeks strike action by Just Eat/Stuart couriers, that began in Sheffield in December, has reached more parts of the country, with strikes taking place in Mansfield, Leicester, Ashford, Folkestone, Reading and Worcester, among others.

Beginning after Just Eat delivery contractor Stuart cut the base delivery rate of pay, and how that scales up over distance, couriers are striking because they are now working for less at a time of rising costs, especially fuel.

But through the action of strikers

in Sheffield, a number of concessions have been won, including paid waiting times from April.

Drivers in Heckmondwike contacted the IWGB union, and joined the action in February, shutting down orders for both Just Eat and UberEats at a retail park, including a busy McDonald's, for one day a week since then. Socialist Party members have been supporting the strikers, as well as helping them and other strike supporters leaflet couriers operating out of nearby McDonald's in Birstall and Morley, with couriers there now planning their own strike action.

120 couriers took action in Mansfield and Sutton-in-Ashfield, shutting

## Glasgow council workers to strike once more in equal pay dispute

SOCIALIST PARTY SCOTLAND

Unison and GMB trade union members at Glasgow City Council are to strike on 29-30 March over equal pay compensation payments.

The workers, overwhelmingly women, will then strike again in April if there is no resolution to the dispute. A statement from Glasgow City Unison, in which Socialist Party Scotland and Scottish Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) supporters play a leading role, says:

"Unison is calling out nearly 9,000 members, and with our sister trade union, also joining the action, this could see over 12,000 workers out on strike."

"This is larger than the historic equal pay strike in the city four years ago and will affect home care, cleaning, catering, schools, nurseries, residential homes, homelessness hostels, addiction services and admin functions across the council."

Kath Stirling, Unison branch chair,

says: "The purpose of the strike action is to force the council to maintain the current arrangements for equal pay compensation payments. These were won after the last strike but the council is moving to tear up those arrangements. This could see smaller payments for some and others left out completely. These are the same women, in the same jobs, still being paid under the same discriminatory gender pay scheme. The women and their jobs haven't changed so why should the compensation arrangements?"

Socialist Party Scotland gives full solidarity to Glasgow council workers in this historic dispute.

Disgracefully, the Scottish National Party (SNP) administration is again showing its anti-trade union colours by trying to dump the 2019 deal. The 2018 equal pay strike was a mass shutdown of council services for 48 hours with cleansing and other council departments walking out in solidarity, in defiance of the anti-trade union laws.

In the run-up to this year's council elections and the escalating cost of living crisis, this strike will be even more politically damaging for the SNP.

The whole workers' movement must give support to this strike, including the Scottish TUC. Solidarity action and coordinating national strike action for pay increases in line with price rises are essential.

Again and again Glasgow's low-paid female workers have been let down, not just by the SNP but Labour in Glasgow before them.

That's why a socialist, pro-trade union political alternative is urgently needed. Scottish TUSC is standing

candidates across Glasgow in the forthcoming elections in support of the equal pay strike, but also for a fighting, no-cuts, needs-budget policy where the council utilises financial mechanisms to stop the cuts and funds the needs of working-class people in the city, mobilising a mass campaign to demand the funding from Holyrood and Westminster.



Protest on 8 March MATT DORSON

## Wiltshire bin strikers win concessions

ALASDAIR COOK  
DORSET SOCIALIST PARTY

The refuse strike in Wiltshire that began less than two weeks ago has ended with the workers winning a better settlement. The original offer put forward by Hills Municipal Collections, of 7% over two years, has been accepted, but the bonus scheme that was previously only given to certain workers, has now been given to more staff, with also further uplifts for staff on the lowest rates of pay.

The Wiltshire refuse strike began in Salisbury on 7 March over attacks on pay and conditions. Then came the attacks on the strikers themselves.

On the picket line there had been

repeated and frequent incidences of strikers being hit by lorry drivers. In Salisbury, two bin workers were hit and had to receive treatment at the local hospital. This, according to the GMB union rep, was believed to be ordered by management. Since then, the employee responsible has been suspended. Similar incidents have been reported at other disputes with Hills in Trowbridge and Calne.

While their original pay demand was not met, the offer was almost unanimously accepted. In just a couple of months, the Salisbury site had gone from no one unionised to around 70% of the workforce on strike with GMB. This short dispute will have given confidence to the workers for when management attempts this again.

## TransPennine Express Conductors stand firm in fair pay dispute

IAIN DALTON  
YORKSHIRE SOCIALIST PARTY

Conductors across the TransPennine Express (TPE) network have now taken five consecutive Sundays of strike action in their dispute about overtime payments.

For the last two years, conductors have had a pay freeze enforced on them, despite working throughout the pandemic. With the gap between what conductors and other grades receive for rest day and Sunday working growing, they have simply asked to a pay increase in order to keep up.

Additionally, conductors earn commission from on-board ticket sales - but these have become much reduced in recent years as larger numbers of tickets are bought online. Northern Rail conductors recently reached agreement for a small 2p per ticket payment for checking such tickets, to offset the reduced income, which TPE conductors are asking their company to also adopt.

TPE, bailed out like other train operating companies during the pandemic, has, despite this, paid out £30 million in dividends to shareholders,

and wants to receive permission from the government to pay out a further £33 million.

Showing their approval of shareholders gaining at the expense of workers, the government recently announced plans to extend the franchise of TPE for eight years beyond its current end date in April 2023.

On the picket line in York, strikers thought the recent awarding of Train Operator of the Year to TPE was a joke. One striker commented: "I can't think of a worse train operator," while another pointed out they had had cancellations all over the place just the day before, and struggled to organise a replacement service.

The strikers welcomed the RMT union's plans to coordinate action across all the different Train Operating Companies. As well as fighting for proper pay rises to keep up with the ever-increasing cost of living, central to this action must be bringing the operating franchises into public ownership under workers' control, rather than extending them.

• Messages calling for "A Fair Deal for Conductors" can be sent to [Matthew.Golton@tpexpress.co.uk](mailto:Matthew.Golton@tpexpress.co.uk)

## University strike continues

The University and College Union (UCU) strike action at 39 universities on the issues of the 'Four Fights' (overworking, underpayment, gender pay gap, and casualisation) and the downgrade of USS pensions, continued from 21 March to 25 March with further action planned for 28 March and 1 April. Socialist Party members have joined the picket lines. Below are some initial reports:

### Newcastle and Northumbria universities

Both picket lines got plenty of support from passing traffic, particularly bus drivers who were all tooting their horns.

One of the strikers talked about how intransigent the university management is. Strikers also mentioned how shocked they were by the P&O sackings (see pages 2-3). There was

agreement that to fight all these dreadful bosses the fightback needs to be stepped up, and needs to be collective.

Undoubtedly in the coming period, a call for a general strike, starting with a 24-hour strike, will gain an echo. When you fight you can win!

ELAINE BRUNSKILL

### Leicester

The best part of the UCU picket line at University of Leicester isn't even the cakes generously supplied. It's the defiant, noisy march around the campus, and the speeches outside the offices of the vice-chancellor. Solidarity was expressed for the people of Ukraine and the sacked P&O workers, and discussions on the picket line made the link between the latter's struggle and the UCU Four Fights dispute.

HEATHER RAWLING



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ISAI PRIVA

SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL COMMITTEE

The Ukraine war has again brought to the fore the plight of refugees. It has created 3.5 million Ukrainian refugees, making it the largest refugee crisis faced by Europe since World War Two.

Scenes of desperate people escaping bombs and leaving behind their possessions, homes and families have been shown on the mainstream media. Everyone knows that war means destruction, but for those in it, it really is a matter of life or death. The sounds of bombs falling, shaking the very floor you stand on, will be one that will be remembered for the rest of your life if you manage to survive and find safety.

Unfortunately, Ukraine is also not the only war that is going on at the moment. The same day as the air strikes in Ukraine started, there were also attacks in Syria, Yemen and Somalia. The list of ongoing armed conflicts around the world causing misery and threatening the lives of innocent people shows that this rotten capitalist system means war.

The number of people displaced from their homes worldwide has been growing exponentially in the last two decades. According to the UNHCR Global Trends report, 2011 was a record year for displacement across borders. Then there were 42.5 million displaced people, 15.2 million of whom were refugees and 26.4 million internally displaced. This was up from a total of 33.9 million at the end of 1997.

By the end of 2020, 82.4 million people were displaced globally; 20.7 million of these were refugees. This means one in every 95 people on earth forced to flee their homes. The long list of ongoing conflicts is further fuelling the refugee crisis. While we haven't got the latest figures, the



# CAPITALISM OFFERS NO SOLUTION TO REFUGEE CRISIS

UNHCR estimates that global forced displacement had surpassed 84 million at mid-2021. And that was before the Ukraine war.

Even the UNHCR report agrees with socialists when we say that war, conflicts, repressive regimes, attacks on human rights and environmental disasters are the reasons for this large number of people being displaced. Let's be clear, no one just decides to be displaced or become a refugee. It's not a choice: it's desperate people taking life-threatening journeys to have a life. No person in that situation should be made to feel like it's their fault.

The 11th year of the Syrian war has left 11.1 million people in need of humanitarian assistance. 13.5 million Syrians have been internally

displaced by violence, which is more than half the country's population. It is estimated that 350,000 people have been killed since the beginning of the conflict.

Eight years into a devastating war in Yemen, 15.6 million people are living in extreme poverty, and 2.3 million children under the age of five are suffering from acute malnutrition. 24.1 million people across Yemen are in need of humanitarian aid. Since the start of the conflict, at least 377,000 people have died. The latest report from the United Nations Development Programme predicts that the number of those killed as a result of Yemen's war could reach 1.3 million by 2030.

The Iraq war and the war in

Afghanistan have also left millions of victims who are paying the price of wars they never wanted or caused.

## Sowing division

For once, the capitalist media in Britain are showing the misery of war and the plight of refugees in the Ukraine because it suits the interests of the ruling classes to do so. If this was a war supported by British capitalism, it would be a different story altogether.

Capitalism is a system based on the drive to make a profit and capitalist governments in different countries carry through policies to further their interests. They do not carry out domestic or foreign policies in the interest of ordinary people, the working-class and young people. Similarly, they are no friends of refugees and asylum seekers.

For them, migrant workers, refugees and asylum seekers are a group of people to blame for the lack of services, austerity and the crises caused by their system, and to be exploited to make a profit. Anti-immigration propaganda might be on pause in the capitalist media during the Ukraine war, but it will be used again to divide communities. Particularly as the cost of living continues to increase and governments prepare for an offensive on working-class living standards.

In 2015, a year of another refugee crisis in Europe caused by war in Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq, the EU Commission met for detailed discussions on brutal measures to stop refugees entering Europe. Measures included building higher fences, cutting financial support, tightening immigration laws and increasing the European border guard by 10,000 by 2020. These armed border forces will have extensive powers to detain and deport migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. There were also cuts to rescue boats in the sea which contributed to the death of at least 3,770 people when they tried to cross the Mediterranean Sea.

Last year, an analysis by the Guardian found that EU member states have used illegal operations to systematically push back 40,000 refugees, including children fleeing from wars from Europe's borders during the pandemic, methods linked to the deaths of more than 2,000 people.

But now the vast coverage of the Ukraine war in the media means that capitalist governments are under pressure to take action to help refugees because of the sympathy and human solidarity expressed by ordinary people.

## Hostile environment

The UK response has been shameful. But the UK government's attitude is consistent with its hostile immigration and asylum policy. It had only issued 500 visas to Ukraine in the first two weeks of the war. Under extreme pressure, it announced measures to make it easier for Ukrainian nationals to apply for a visa, including setting up an online application form.

It has also set up the Homes for Ukraine scheme, which promises that households will be paid £350 a month for accommodation for Ukrainian refugees. But the scheme needs proper funding and should be extended to all refugees, otherwise it will end up like the previous failed schemes. The Syrian resettlement programme, for example, only rehoused 500 out of a total of 20,000 Syrians who were brought to the UK.



**Only a socialist programme will be able to unite the working class in a global fight to end the capitalist profit system that causes war, poverty, repression and oppression that creates refugees**

The current, temporary puny measures by the Home Office to help Ukraine refugees won't fool the migrants, refugees and asylum seekers living in London. Nor do they change the hostile immigration policy. There are many examples to illustrate the discrimination of the UK immigration system, including last year's response to Afghans fleeing the Taliban. But for

a large sections of society, the Windrush scandal, when people who had spent most of their lives in this country faced deportation and mistreatment, really exposed the brutality of Home Office policies which disproportionately affect black and Asian people.

## 82.4m

**By the end of 2020, 82.4 million people were displaced globally. This means that one in every 95 people on earth were forced to flee their homes**

The Tories and the capitalist media are blaming Home Secretary Priti Patel for the lack of action to help refugees. The Financial Times, for example, wrote: "Making asylum as difficult as possible is exactly what the Home Office under Patel - who is herself a child of migrants - has strived to achieve." But Patel, like her predecessors Theresa May, Amber Rudd and Sajid Javid, is loyally carrying through policies in the interests of the capitalist class.

The 'hostile environment' policy, which came into effect in October 2010, is a series of discriminatory legislation to make it as difficult as possible to stay in the UK and to bully and force people to voluntarily leave. Theresa May, as home secretary in 2012, said: "The aim is to create, here in Britain, a really hostile environment for illegal immigration."

The term 'hostile environment' was first used by Alan Johnson as home secretary in Gordon Brown's government in 2010. 'New Labour' under Tony Blair introduced a series of laws restricting the right of those fleeing repression and war to claim asylum. It also introduced a racist points-based immigration system for non-EU workers. And the Blairites backed Theresa May's 'hostile environment' measures.

The UK government has sold £20 billion worth of arms to Saudi Arabia, which were then used to bomb Yemen

and Gaza. It's worth remembering that 100 Blairite Labour MPs voted with the Tories to block a parliamentary vote to stop arms sales to Saudi Arabia. Both Tories and Labour voted for wars in Iraq and Syria, against protests by millions of people.

Even tougher measures against refugees and asylum seekers are now being prepared. If the Nationality and Border Bill becomes an act, it will legalise the Home Office treating refugees as criminals. Under the bill, people fleeing war, persecution and oppression will be denied asylum based purely on how they arrive in the country. Refugees and asylum seekers arriving by boat, many of them already severely traumatised, will be formally classified as criminals and face the prospect of punishment, including being jailed for up to four years.

The bill proposes spending £412 million a year jailing refugees who cross the Channel - five times more than the cost of housing them in the asylum support system. There is huge controversy over this bill. The UNHCR has warned that it undermines the 1951 Refugee Convention, the agreement which has protected refugees for decades, and of which the UK is a signatory. Even the House of Lords voted against sections of the bill at its third reading.

Anger about the way refugees and asylum seekers are treated can be built on to scrap this bill and to create a fairer immigration system. We say such a system needs to be democratically discussed and implemented by the working class. The Tories and Starmer's Labour Party cannot be trusted to help refugees and asylum seekers or working-class people generally.

## Socialist alternative

No amount of barriers and brutal treatment are going to stop people from risking their lives to escape poverty, repression and conflict. Even during Covid, tens of thousands of people continued to leave their homes and embark on dangerous journeys across deserts and oceans. The International Organization for Migration (IOM)'s Missing Migrants Project recorded over 3,000 deaths on migratory routes worldwide in 2020.

The reaction from right-wing governments is often very different from that of ordinary people. While capitalist politicians think of ways to increase their influence, career and profit, ordinary working-class and young people show humane solidarity in support some of the most desperate in our society.

In 2015, for example, the shocking image of a toddler found lying face-down on a beach, one of 12 Syrians who drowned attempting to reach Greece, went viral on social media. It was the spark that led to massive demonstrations in several cities around the world. In London, tens of thousands of people marched through the street on the UN anti-racism demonstration. It was the



Ukrainian refugees in Poland MIREK PRUCHNICKI/CC

surgeries, housing and other services that have been cut to the bone by both Tory and Labour administrations.

Our call for mass investment into jobs, homes and services for all was well received on the demos. We highlighted that there is enough money to provide these things. But we need to take the wealth off the 1% and share it in the interest of the 99%.

The Ukraine war has also raised the issue of the super-rich owning big mansions. Michael Gove, the levelling up, housing and communities secretary, has confirmed that the government is exploring the idea of seizing the UK mansions of sanctioned Russian oligarchs to house Ukrainians. But why stop at only seizing mansions owned by Russian oligarchs? The Socialist Party is calling for the tens of thousands of empty properties owned by millionaires, billionaires and big multinational companies to be brought into public ownership.

There are 600,000 empty properties in the UK. This would be more than enough to house the 274,000 UK residents that are homeless. Two years ago, at the peak of the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, the government was able to provide homes for all the homeless people. We demanded that this should be extended beyond the Covid-19 pandemic.

But for these policies to be implemented, the working class and young people need our own political representation. A new mass workers' party that will implement domestic and foreign policies, which will improve the living standards for all. A party that has an internationalist approach and fights for socialist policies. Only a socialist programme will be able to unite the working class in a global fight to end the capitalist profit system that causes war, poverty, repression and oppression that in turn forces people to flee their homes, and for democratic control and management of all the different aspects of our lives.



MARY FINCH

the Socialist  
formerly **Militant**

Issue 1172  
24-30 March 2022

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Friday before publication, or Monday morning for urgent news, unless otherwise agreed with the editors.

The Socialist goes to press on a Tuesday night. We publish online on Wednesday and in print on Thursday.

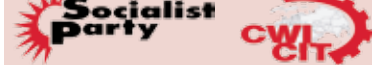
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The Socialist is the weekly newspaper of the Socialist Party, the England and Wales section of the Committee for a Workers' International  
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ISSN 1366-9621  
Published by Socialist Publications,  
PO Box 1398, Enfield EN1 9GT  
Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office  
Printed by trade union labour at Reach Printing Services

Militant issue 1: October 1964  
The Socialist issue 1: 7 February 1997

"The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it."  
Karl Marx

**National Pensioners Convention (NPC) biennial delegate conference**

# “Unite and fight against the Tory government’s cost-of-living offensive”

Pensioners gathered at their biennial conference on 15-16 March in angry mood, determined to fight back against the Tory government’s attack on the ‘Triple Lock’ state pensions guarantee, and pensioners living standards.

With pensions being cut in real terms, pensioners face a winter of increasing poverty and deaths from an inability to afford the cost of heating their homes.

This anger was expressed in demands from around the country to increase the £10 Christmas Bonus and the Winter Fuel Allowance. The conference also demanded restoring the Triple Lock (uprating pensions to whatever is higher - inflation, wages

or 2.5%), and the free BBC licence for the over 75-year-olds.

Yorkshire and Humber delegates called for the bus networks to be brought back into public ownership. PCS retired union delegates opposed the government’s ‘Voter Identity’ proposals that ‘will exclude those that who don’t have passports or photographic driving passes from taking part in the democratic process’. An amendment was passed calling for the energy companies to be nationalised.

As well as passing these policies, pensioners expressed doubts that they could rely on Westminster politicians to defend their interests. Therefore, the need for the NPC to



PHOTO PAUL MATTSSON

sharpen and widen its campaigning base by increasing local trade union and community support was apparent.

A discussion in local NPC groups is taking place with a view to building the organisation from the grassroots up, recruiting younger pensioners, increasing fundraising, and building solidarity with local activists.

Pensioners need the return of the Triple Lock, but that is just the start. The state pension must increase

substantially to take it above the current poverty level.

We also need to counter the false media perpetuated in the right-wing media between young people and pensioners. We have much more in common than divides us. Our slogan is: ‘Trade unionists, youth, pensioners unite and fight against the Tory government’s cost of living offensive.’

**CLARE WILKINS, DAVID JONES, DAVE WARREN AND TERRY PEARCE**  
NPC DELEGATES AND SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS

## Campaigners step up fight to stop toxic waste incinerator

**NEILL DUNNE**  
LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST PARTY

Stop the Simonswood Incinerator (SSI) has stepped up its campaign to stop Lancashire County Council building a new toxic medical waste incinerator. If approved, it will be built on the boundary of Knowsley and West Lancashire.

The incinerator could potentially pump out harmful microscopic particulate matter (pm10 and pm2.5 aerosols) into the air, putting communities within a minimum of ten kilometres distance at risk of inhaling the dangerous cancer-causing debris.

Pollution is also set to increase via carbon dioxide emissions, despite Lancashire County Council declaring a ‘climate emergency’.

A United Utilities borehole also lies within the vicinity, with part of the water source sitting directly underneath the site. This is the sole drinking water source for Southport and

Formby, as well as providing water to other surrounding areas.

SSI held its first public meeting in St Andrew’s Church, Tower Hill, with the venue full to capacity; the group had no choice but to turn people away and instead offered the alternative options of watching the livestream or reading the distributed minutes once the meeting was concluded.

The campaign is aiming to raise awareness among communities spread across the 10km radius, with residents in the campaign distributing over 20,000 leaflets. Public stalls have also been held in Maghull and Ormskirk, where residents were not aware of the proposed plans.

Knowsley Unison union branch has committed to support the campaign with invaluable advice, publicity and potential donations from their membership and wider community.

The public meeting unanimously agreed to stage more marches in the coming weeks.



A packed SSI meeting pledges to halt a planned toxic incinerator



## Blackpool demo: Strong anti-Tory mood

**CHRIS BAUGH**  
LANCASHIRE SOCIALIST PARTY

On a welcome day of sunshine, hundreds of trade unionists, including sacked P&O workers, NHS campaigners, and disability and anti-fracking’ activists, assembled in Blackpool on Saturday 19 March.

With a samba band, and our trade union and climate banners prominent, we marched from opposite Blackpool Tower to the Winter Gardens where the Tory Party was holding its spring conference.

This was a chance to protest against the Tories’ ruthless squeeze on living standards, and their attempt to make workers pay the cost of the Covid pandemic and the capitalist economic crisis.

The ‘cost of living crisis’ demo had originally been called by the Trades Union Congress (TUC) as a ‘national demo’, but was then cancelled, without good reason, at the last minute (see ‘Workers’ struggles show way forward’ at [socialistparty.org.uk](http://socialistparty.org.uk)).

But the need to protest against

the Tories was as strong as ever. The Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Trades Council (BFWTUC), alongside Lancashire trades councils, Unite branches in the region, NHS protesters - who also provided an ad-van which was driven round the town calling for opposition to the Health Care Bill - and climate activists involved in the successful anti-fracking protests in the area, all came together and decided the protest should go ahead.

The TUC, under pressure, has now called a new demo on 18 June - see page 5.

At the Blackpool demo, Darren Proctor from the RMT spoke powerfully on behalf of a contingent of sacked P&O workers; Darren received rapturous applause for his call for workers’ solidarity.

The rally held outside the Tory conference was chaired by Lynn Goodwin, BFWTUC President, with speakers including the trades council secretary Ken Cridland and others from the various campaigns represented.

# Why I’m standing for TUSC

## Southampton - Campaigning to save St Mary’s leisure centre

**GRAHAM HENRY**  
SOUTHAMPTON SOCIALIST PARTY AND TUSC

I live in the St Mary’s area of Southampton. It is just one of many places that have been devastated by the austerity years.

The Tories took control of the council in 2021. Before that we had nine years of a Labour council implementing severe Tory government cuts to vital public services - closing after-school clubs, council-run care homes and libraries.

Alongside other Socialist Party members, I am involved in the campaign to save the local St Mary’s leisure centre from closure (see [socialistparty.org.uk](http://socialistparty.org.uk)). The community has really rallied behind this fight. Unfortunately, the Tories are pushing ahead with their plans to sell the building.

I also recently became a ‘block representative’ - liaising between the council and residents - and was finally able to help solve longstanding repairs that dated back to 2017.

For the election, I’m standing on a strictly no-cuts platform. And I’m working locally to try and show people there is a different way to do things.



PHOTO NICK CHAFFEY

I am standing in the Bargate ward where I live. And I would also like to wish my fellow TUSC candidates every success in their aim of providing a viable political alternative to this corrupt, capitalist system.

## Hospitality workers fight exploitation here and in US

On 9 March, hospitality workers in the Unite trade union held a day of action in London highlighting their poor treatment.

It kicked off with a demo outside the newly opened Abandon Ship Bar in Covent Garden.

This was to bring attention to how the parent company, MacMerry, has mistreated staff in its Scottish bars. Those workers have raised a collective grievance against the employer, which has led to one union member being suspended and unceremoniously escorted from one of the bars

while on shift.

This was followed by a great show of internationalism, with a joint meeting between Unite Hospitality and UNITE HERE (US hospitality union) regarding organising across borders in global hotel chains, and the exchange of organising tactics.

With the delegation sent by UNITE HERE, we then rallied outside the Chiltern Firehouse, whose owner sacked all the staff at Chateau Marmont, his US hotel in Los Angeles, at the start of the pandemic, and then refused to rehire them once the hotel

reopened, even though they were legally obliged to do so.

Unsurprisingly, most of the workers not recalled were UNITE HERE members and activists.

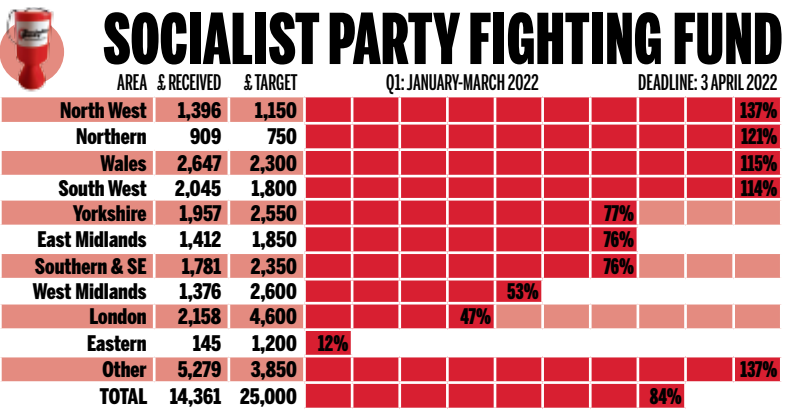
Hospitality workers are one of the most exploited workforces, and at the rate Unite Hospitality is growing, it’s clear we’ve had enough and want to fight back and make a change.

We need a £15-an-hour minimum wage, an end to zero-hour contracts, safe journeys home, fair tips and equal pay for young workers!  
**UNITE HOSPITALITY BRANCH MEMBER**

## Comrades - a final push for the fighting fund!

Socialist Party members and supporters are doing all they can to make sure we smash through the fighting fund target. We are really close to doing so. We have raised over £21,000 - 84% of the target. **Please rush in all your fighting fund by 3rd April** ([socialistparty.org.uk/donate](http://socialistparty.org.uk/donate)).

Can you do a last phone round of members and supporters for donations to help fund our work in the TUSC election campaign? Can you plan an extra campaign stall? Let’s do all we can to make sure we smash through the target!!



## The Socialist - sales success

I sold 23 copies of the Socialist and raised an extra £13.50 fighting fund outside Blackhorse Road tube station, north east London, on 17 March.

One building worker stopped and bought a copy. Then, ten minutes later, his workmate stopped for a paper. When they met up and he realised his workmate already had a copy he said he’d share his with his other workmates.

Recently, I’ve also had a few East European construction workers buy the paper, understandably concerned with the war taking place close to their home countries.

Clearly, site workers are discussing the issues of Ukraine and the cost-of-living crisis with each other and looking for answers.  
**MARTIN REYNOLDS**

**Geoff Jones’ funeral**  
Friday 1 April - 10.30am  
Morrison Crematorium, Heol Pentre Felen, Morrison, Swansea SA6 6BY



## WHAT WE STAND FOR

**T**he Socialist Party fights for socialism - a democratic society run for the needs of all and not the profits of a few. We also oppose every cut, fighting in our day-to-day campaigning for every possible improvement for working-class people. The organised working class has the potential power to stop the cuts and transform society.

As capitalism dominates the globe, the struggle for genuine socialism must be international. The Socialist Party is part of the Committee for a Workers’ International (CWI) which organises across the world. Our demands include...  
**CWI CWI**

**PUBLIC SERVICES**  
• No to ALL cuts in jobs, public services and benefits. Defend our pensions.  
• No to privatisation and the Private Finance Initiative (PFI). Renationalise all privatised utilities and services, with compensation paid only on the basis of proven need.  
• Fully fund all services and run them under accountable, democratic committees that include representatives of service workers and users.

**RIGHTS**  
• Oppose discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, sexuality, age, and all other forms of prejudice.  
• Repeal all laws that trample over civil liberties. For the right to protest! End police harassment.  
• Defend abortion rights. For a woman’s right to choose when and whether to have children.  
• For the right to asylum. No to racist immigration laws.  
• For the right to vote at 16.

**MASS WORKERS’ PARTY**  
• For a mass workers’ party drawing together workers, young people and activists from workplace, community, environmental, anti-racist and anti-cuts campaigns, to provide a fighting, political alternative to the pro-big business parties.

**SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM**  
• No to imperialist wars and occupations.  
• Tax the super-rich! For a socialist government to take into public ownership the top 150 companies and the banking system that dominate the British economy, and run them under democratic working-class control and management. Compensation to be paid only on the basis of proven need.  
• A democratic socialist plan of production based on the interests of the overwhelming majority of people, and in a way that safeguards the environment.  
• No to the bosses’ neoliberal European Union and single market. For a socialist Europe and a socialist world!

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# Capitalism sees profitable opportunity to increase fossil fuel production

TOM BALDWIN

SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL COMMITTEE

With the horror of war in Ukraine filling the front pages, the latest report of the United Nations (UN) Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) got little news coverage. But dealing with rapid and destructive climate change has lost none of its urgency.

The IPCC report continues the trend of worrying scientific predictions regarding global heating and the increased incidence of destructive extreme weather events to ecosystems and human populations. UN secretary general António Guterres says that when it comes to climate action, "delay means death."

The Ukraine war has direct implications for meeting that challenge. Yet instead of using the war-related issues of fuel security and soaring energy prices to rapidly transition to green renewable energy, capitalist politicians, of all hues, are trying to increase fossil fuel production outside of Russia.

Boris Johnson, for example, batted away the public outcry arising from the Saudi Arabian regime's latest human rights abuses on his recent visit there to beg the dictatorship to increase its oil production.

## Russian exports

Russia is a major exporter of fossil fuels. It's the world's second biggest producer of gas and third biggest producer of oil. In 2020 it was responsible for 17% and 12% of global output respectively. Almost half of Russian exports are fossil fuels. The war has pushed up fuel prices and made the energy market more volatile.

In response to the invasion, many governments have moved to restrict trading with Russia.

The US, the world's largest producer of oil and natural gas, has stopped importing Russian fossil fuels, which only account for a small fraction (3%) of US total consumption. Likewise, the UK gets most of its gas supplies from North Sea fields and imports less than 1% directly from Russia.

In mainland Europe, however, it's a different story, with 35% of gas supplied by Russia. Germany has temporarily halted the opening of the 'Nord Stream 2' gas pipeline from Russia. However, with two-thirds of their gas coming from Russia, Germany has not imposed punitive sanctions on Russian fossil fuels imports.

Despite their professed concern for Ukrainian citizens and their claim that sanctions are an effective way of protecting them, capitalist

governments in Europe are clearly prioritising the supply of energy to their economies and hence protecting business profits.

Concerns about pricing and security of energy sources are proving a more urgent spur for many governments to try and move away from Russian fossil fuels than environmental concerns ever have. But this pivot away from Russia does not mean a clear move towards clean energy.

Robert Habeck, Germany's Green Party vice-chancellor and economy and climate minister, justified his party's U-turn on ending the use of coal for energy generation as 'a short-term economic expedient'.

## 'Big oil' fan club

In the UK, the Net Zero Scrutiny Group (NZSG) of 20 Tory MPs was formed last year. This pro-fossil fuels group includes Steve Baker, former chair of the hardcore-Brexit European Research Group (ERG), and former minister and GB News presenter, Esther McVey.

NZSG is calling for the government to rethink its pledge to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 by scrapping 'green levies'. They have tried to claim that this is necessary to avoid people being made worse off by rising fuel costs.

Needless to say it does not support nationalising energy firms in order to ensure this. Nor do their parliamentary voting records suggest any genuine concern for the living standards of working-class people.

NZSG is now using the Ukraine war to make the case for increased domestic production of fossil fuels. Steve Baker has used the conflict to demand the ban on toxic 'fracking' be overturned.

He implied those opposed to fracking were complicit in enabling Putin to begin the invasion, saying: "Everyone who allowed our shale gas to remain in the ground on a false pretence should hang their heads in shame", and called on the Prime Minister to "go for gas with all the vigour of a national war effort".

This drive is not limited to the Tories' right-wing fringe. Chancellor Rishi Sunak has pushed for extraction in six new North Sea oil and gas fields with the go-ahead expected to be given this year.

The conflict in Ukraine means fossil fuel corporations can now spin increased production with buzzwords like 'energy security' and 'independence'.

In a capitalist society geared towards profit, rising fuel prices makes this a more attractive investment



'Big oil' is making huge profits on the back of the war in Ukraine PHOTO PAUL MATTSOON



**The conflict in Ukraine means fossil fuel corporations can now spin increased production with buzzwords like 'energy security' and 'independence'**

proposition for these firms.

Thus, oil giant Shell who two weeks after the COP26 environment summit last November, when oil was under \$70 a barrel, said it was pulling out of the Cambo field off the Shetland Islands, is now reconsidering as oil is priced at over \$140 a barrel!

However, the reliance on Russian fossil fuels is also a clear argument for renewable, clean energy as the alternative. Solar and wind power energy sources are stable, regardless of geopolitical stresses and conflicts.

However, Russia is also a key producer of many of the metals and other materials needed for the production and storage of such energy. Rising prices of these commodities makes investing in green energy production less attractive for private firms.

This is another example of why the fight against climate change must be a global effort and that the big global energy corporations must be nationalised as part of a democratic plan of sustainable, net-zero carbon production.

## Military

Another consequence of this war is the drive by Western governments to significantly raise military spending.

Such expenditure is already a colossal drain on the resources of society. Global military spending is

estimated at close to \$2 trillion annually, more than even the highest predictions for the cost of stopping climate change between now and 2050.

Building up military arsenals is also incredibly polluting. Research from Brown University found the US military to be "the single largest institutional producer of greenhouse gases in the world", with a greater carbon footprint than entire countries such as Portugal.

The destruction of war itself also comes at an enormous environmental cost. The climate implications can be added to the long list of the horrors that war brings.

Research from the right-wing think tank the Institute for Economic Affairs showed 75% of under-40s in Britain see capitalism as responsible for climate change.

They're right. Capitalism's unplanned, headlong drive for profits is a threat to life on earth.

Competition between the ruling classes of different nation states is a constant impediment to tackling climate change. War, the most brutal expression of that competition, worsens the risk of climate chaos in many ways.

A socialist society, based on a democratic planned economy and the international unity and cooperation of the working-class, can eliminate both.



**75% of under-40s in Britain see capitalism as responsible for climate change**

# Ukraine war exacerbates global food crisis

## Only a democratic socialist plan of production can stop price hikes and shortages

IAIN DALTON

SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL COMMITTEE

"We were already having problems with food prices... What countries are doing now is exacerbating that, and the war is putting us in situation where we could easily fall into a food crisis," said Maximo Torero, chief economist for the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation.

Among the major food producing nations, Russia is the world's top wheat exporter, with 17% of the global market, and Ukraine third with 12%. Ukraine is the top exporter of sunflower seeds with 30% of the market, and Russia second with 27%. Ukraine is also the fourth largest exporter of corn, with 17% of global exports. 50 countries rely on Ukraine and Russia for 30% or more of their wheat supplies.

Directly affected by the war are shipments of grain from Black Sea and Azov Sea ports such as Odessa, Nikolayev, and Mariupol - which have shut down since the onset of the conflict. Almost half of the winter harvest of corn hasn't been shipped out of Ukraine.

Also, the cutting off of Russia from the SWIFT financial payment system has had a knock-on effect for shipments from the country. Indeed, the threat of sanctions is leading to companies 'self-sanctioning', ie not committing to shipments of Russian commodities for fear of being hit by future sanctions.

## Harvest disruptions

The harvesting of winter sowings in Ukraine will undoubtedly be affected, both in terms of how well crops can be tended and, if the war continues, the degree to which they can be harvested.

The threat of further sanctions will likely lead to reduced summer sowings of grains in Russia. And while higher prices may lead to increased sowing levels in other countries such as the US, as an article from Dutch financial services company ING warned: "If we see a prolonged disruption in supply from Ukraine and Russia, increased plantings from other producing countries may help, but clearly will not offset the full potential losses from these Black Sea producers."

All these developments come on top of already soaring food prices, a result of numerous factors, including the impact of Covid-19 on worker absences and the ongoing supply chain crisis causing delays in shipping.

Another key factor is the environmental crisis, such as the heatwave and drought in Canada that adversely impacted on durum wheat used in producing pasta. It's predicted that the cost of pasta in the UK could increase by 50% this year.

Heavy rains in China means its wheat crop might be 20% less than expected, although China's 18



Migrant workers at the Egypt-Libya border queue for food relief PHOTO EU CPMA/CC

months of wheat reserves can cover this shortfall.

The increased cost of industrial inputs into farming is an additional factor. The price of urea, a key component in some fertilizers - largely produced in Ukraine and Russia - has skyrocketed. Fuel, necessary to run farming vehicles, has also seen its price soar.

## Midwife of revolution

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**Under capitalism the misery of workers goes hand in hand with profit bonanzas at the top**

meeting the needs of people, rather than the profits for a handful at the top.

Unlike the generous spirit shown by millions of ordinary people in donating to help aid refugees from the war, the response of many capitalist governments to this latest food crisis is to increase protectionist trade measures further. Hungary has banned all grain exports. Serbia is banning exports of wheat, corn, flour and cooking oil. Indonesia has limited palm oil exports.

Meanwhile, just four companies dominate almost 75% of grain trading.

Archer-Daniels-Midland reported a 22% growth in profits year-on-year in the fourth quarter of 2021, and upping its dividend payouts. Bunge increased its profits by 17% in the fourth quarter of 2021.

Cargill reported the biggest profit in its 156-year history in its 2020-21 financial year; while Louis Dreyfus posted profits for first half of 2021-22 financial year of \$336 million, up a whopping 167%!

Under capitalism the misery of workers goes hand in hand with profit bonanzas at the top.

Only by bringing the big grain traders and the supermarket and logistics giants into public ownership, under democratic workers' control and management, can we guarantee that the food produced in the world will actually ensure everyone can be fed at a genuinely affordable price.

# Child Q strip search outrage

## Racism, sexism, police and profit out of schools

HUGO PIERRE  
UNISON NEC BLACK MEMBERS' REP  
(PERSONAL CAPACITY)

There has been justifiable rage in Hackney, east London, following the report that a 15-year-old black girl, Child Q, was subjected to a full body intimate strip search by police at school. She was even told to remove a sanitary towel because the school believed she had drugs on her; she didn't.

Child Q said: "Someone walked into the school where I was supposed to feel safe, took me away from the people who were supposed to protect me, and stripped me naked, while on my period".

Thousands of local people have demonstrated outside Stoke Newington police station and Hackney Town Hall, and there have been ongoing protests by students at the school where the strip search took place.

What happened to Child Q was child abuse by the police, and there is rightly anger that this took place in school where parents expect their children to be cared for. The Child Safeguarding Review report of the incident found it likely that racism played a part in the decision to call the police and the police's decision to search the child.

School staff suspected Child Q had cannabis on her. They found nothing in her bag, blazer or shoes. They called the schools police liaison officer, who was unavailable, then called 101.

Two local female officers took Child Q into a medical room to conduct a search, which the safeguarding review said should only be reserved where there is suspicion of Class A drugs! With no parent or legally trained 'appropriate adult' present during the search, the school worker assumed this role, but was not told by the police what they were going to do and remained outside the room. The worker said to the review: "In hindsight I put my trust in the law", believing the police would act lawfully.

The Socialist Party demands that no intimate or strip searches should be carried out at any school, no untrained school staff should act as 'appropriate adult', and parents or guardians must be present where police want to interview a child in school.

### Criminalising children

The report also said that both the school and the police failed to take account of the safeguarding of Child Q, and instead simply saw the issue as a potential criminal matter. Many parents who spoke at the protests expressed their concerns that local schools see black children as a danger - 'adultification' - and often practice a 'zero-tolerance' policy. In the past, the borough has had a problem with high exclusion rates for black children.

If the police responsible came



Socialist Party members joined protests at Hackney Town Hall and Stoke Newington police station LONDON SP



**The Socialist Party demands that Londoners, especially in working-class communities like Hackney, have a police service accountable to elected workers' representatives.**

from Stoke Newington police station, there would be no surprise that racism was a factor. Older activists still remember the murder of Colin Roach at their hands. There can be no trust in the Metropolitan Police Service, where recent reports exposed a culture of racism and misogyny. They remain unaccountable to local workers

The Met, which is still directly accountable to the home secretary, but now in consultation with the mayor of London, remains the least accountable policing authority in the UK. The Socialist Party demands that Londoners, especially in working-class communities like Hackney, have a police service accountable to elected workers' representatives. Their day-to-day operational tasks must be determined by the local community, as well as who is recruited.

Unfortunately, many of the secondary schools in Hackney are now academies. This means they can act outside of any policies agreed by the local authority and don't have to take their advice. It seems the school only approved the council's model policies on safeguarding in the summer of 2021.

The Trust that runs the school could also be completely unaccountable to the local community and run

by business sponsors. It is also not clear whether local parents are on the Trust board and how they are accountable to the school community. The children at the school will have little or no real representation to determine the policies of the school. However the local authority still has responsibility for the safeguarding of all children and, as such, the Socialist Party demands that it instruct all schools that no strip or intimate searches can take place in any school.

### Union action

The National Education Union, in particular, has run a number of campaigns in east London against bullying in academies and attacks on teachers' terms and conditions. These attacks undermine the ability of school workers to make challenges to authority, whether it's questioning the decisions of the police or challenging school policies.

The Socialist Party demands the ending of academies and free schools and that all schools be brought back under direct local authority control.

Some students understandably feel let down by the action of some school staff. However, the demands of the students for proper



**The Socialist Party demands the ending of academies and free schools and that all schools be brought back under direct local authority control**

safeguarding and safety from the police can only be guaranteed if there is strong trade union organisation and a willingness to fight.

Hackney is one of the poorest boroughs in England even though parts have been gentrified. Attacks on services, especially for young people, have resulted in some being trapped in a life of crime.

The Socialist Party demands fully funded professional play and youth services, backed up with support services to provide for mental health and well-being services for young people. And Hackney needs well-built council housing to meet the demands of thousands living in poor accommodation or on the waiting lists.

But councillors, whether at Hackney Town Hall or City Hall, including Mayor Sadiq Khan, are making Tory cuts to services. Khan had no confidence in Met Commissioner Cressida Dick, but Londoners have no confidence he will fight for the resources our children need for learning, for their protection in school, or for the provision of safe and productive after-school activities.

To fight for the demands students like Child Q need to keep them safe, we need fighting no-cuts councillors in Hackney determined to fight for the money the borough needs.

# Jane James (28 September 1955-14 March 2022)

## A kind and determined fighter for the working class

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of our Socialist Party comrade Jane James after a long battle with illness.

Jane and I were born in Paddington, but eventually we were rehoused in the 'New Town' of Stevenage with our parents. Like so many other families, moving out of London became both a wrench but also the opportunity to live in decent housing.

Both our parents were political and cultured; this was to provide the nucleus for Jane's future participation in revolutionary politics. Our mother would remark in later years that she was proud to have brought all her children up as socialists. Our parents were active in the Labour Party. Our father was also a trade unionist and our mother became involved in children's adventure playgrounds.

### Young Socialists

This inspired Jane to join the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS), where she met supporters of Militant (forerunner of the Socialist Party), including Steve Glennon and Sue Cummins. Jane was immediately drawn to the ideas and methods of Marxism, and joined Militant shortly after attending her first LPYS conference in 1973.

While still at school, Jane quickly became active in Militant, and also became branch secretary of the LPYS. Clare Doyle, national treasurer of Militant at the time, fondly remembers meeting up to discuss finance when Jane was still in school uniform!

Jane left school with a raft of qualifications, and her first job was working at the local land registry office. There she joined the CPSA and became active in the union. Jane eventually left that job after a short period and started work at British Aerospace, the largest employer in Stevenage. Jane joined the APEX union and became a senior union shop steward.

It was here that Jane honed her organisational and leadership skills. Taking on her employer, she was in the forefront of many battles, leading to industrial action in some instances. These skills that Jane acquired would turn out to be of great benefit to our party when confronting the Labour Party and trade union bureaucracies throughout her later work as a full-time organiser for our party.

Jane was also a tireless advocate for Militant at her workplace, selling our paper to her fellow trade unionists and pushing our ideas within her union.

When Jane and her then partner Glyn had their first child, Clare, in 1981, Jane left her employment but stayed active within Militant. Their second child, Sarah, was born in 1983.

Jane eventually became regional treasurer for our party in the Eastern region. The job of treasurer in



a revolutionary party is of utmost importance, but not the kind of role that suits everyone. However, Jane's enthusiasm and commitment for the job has had a long-lasting impact on many comrades who have taken up the same role. They have taken inspiration from Jane's contribution and meticulous approach to maintaining the finances of our party at regional and national level.

### Expulsion from Labour

Our orientation towards reaching out to workers previously meant working in the Labour Party. Jane was active at branch and constituency level, but was also involved in the women's section. The expulsion of the five members of the Militant Editorial Board from the Labour Party in 1983 was a turning point for our work. Shortly after, the right wing of the Labour Party in Stevenage started the process of expelling our comrades.

Jane, along with nine other comrades, was targeted by the right wing after attending a fundraising event to raise Fighting Fund for the Militant. The courageous battle by all ten comrades to resist the expulsions started in 1985. Their actions to fight the right wing of the Labour Party included challenging the decision in court.

During this period, Jane became the partner of fellow Militant full-time organiser, Jim Horton. Jane's next battle was against the Poll Tax. Her role as a regional full-time organiser, along with Jim, meant travelling the length and breadth of the Eastern region to attend various court cases and to stop bailiff actions against Poll Tax non-payers.

Jane carried on as a regional full-time organiser, but in challenging circumstances, particularly after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, which impacted the work of our party. Jim lost his first partner and fellow comrade Kim; his two children, Jade and Fern, then became part of Jane and Jim's family, together with Clare and Sarah.

After the turn away from the Labour Party, we stood in the 1997 general election. Once again, Jane and Jim were instrumental in pursuing the ideas of Marxism in a very difficult campaign.

In the late 1990s Jane started work at the Socialist Party's national office in London, where she became national treasurer and a member of the executive committee.

Not long after this, Jane and Jim moved to Tottenham with their family to be nearer the national office. Jane's skills in dealing with finance at

a regional level were greatly appreciated by comrades working alongside her at the national office. She was held in high esteem by all the various regional treasurers and full-time organisers she collaborated with in her national role.

### Industrial organiser

From 2007, Jane worked in the industrial department at the national office alongside Bill Mullins and, later, Rob Williams. Jane was immediately involved in the campaign to defend four Socialist Party members who were victimised by the undemocratic leadership of Unison.

All these comrades had outstanding records of fighting for their members. Jane helped organise the 'Defend the 4' campaign to force the Unison leadership to drop the charges. Her capacity to deal with the bureaucracies of the trade union movement greatly enhanced the campaign.

Jane was also engaged in the struggle to defend the 600 jobs lost at Visteon in 2009. Along with other comrades, she supported the workers' occupation that developed at the Visteon plant in Enfield.

Jane's final years became a battle with dementia that so cruelly robbed Jim, her family and comrades of experiencing her exceptional talents and understanding. Jane, with the help of Jim, fought valiantly to mitigate the assorted symptoms that are associated with this disease.

When recollecting a person's life, we choose to recognise the kindness that we have experienced from them. Looking back over Jane's life, it would take a gargantuan struggle by anyone to reveal anything that resembled the opposite of that description.

Jane was a wonderful mother to Clare, Sarah, Jade and Fern. She will be sorely missed by Jim, her family, and all the comrades who knew her.

Above all, Jane will be remembered for her determination, enthusiasm, and unassuming character. She never forgot her working-class roots and the absolute necessity to rid the world of war, poverty and discrimination. Jane understood in her early life that the only way to achieve this was to fight for a democratically run socialist society, and devoted most of her life to this end. Her efforts will not have been in vain.

MARK PICKERSGILL  
STEVENAGE SOCIALIST PARTY

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# the Socialist

Issue 1172

24-30 March 2022

formerly **Militant**

## WHILE WAR AND POVERTY RAGE...



STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE OF UKRAINE/CC

## ...THE RICH GET RICHER

- No trust in capitalist politicians
- Build new mass workers' parties

**T**he news from Mariupol and Ukraine continues to be heartbreaking. The war rolls on. The death toll climbs. The suffering multiplies. The brutality escalates. The refugees flood out, fleeing the horrors in search of safety.

Not everyone suffers in a war however. It's been revealed that British weapons manufacturer BAE Systems' share price rose 23% in the first four weeks of the war.

Across the world, big business bosses will be watching their bank balances fatten up as the war rolls on. 16 of the world's 20 biggest arms dealers have also seen share prices rise as this war rages.

Meanwhile, April brings further suffering for working-class families as wages lag way behind bill rises and price hikes (see pages

4-5), not to mention the brutal attacks coming from the bosses' fire and rehire or, in the case of P&O; 'fire and then super-exploit other workers' (see pages 2-3). And like the arms producers, the energy companies are racking up obscene profits.

War is the inevitable consequence of an international capitalist system based on profit, exploitation and oppression. So is poverty. So is working-class people suffering.

Five members of the House of Lords have shares in BAE Systems according to the official register of interests. Neither they nor any of the parties currently in Westminster have an alternative to the war, nor to the driving down of working-class living standards.

None of them, including the Labour Party under Keir Starmer, support the

nationalisation of the gas and energy companies. The Tories and New Labour represent those who benefit from war and profiteering!

The conclusion is that we need new mass parties that represents the working class - anti-war, anti-cuts, pro-nationalisation. They need to be based on strengthening the trade unions in struggle, and a programme that puts workers' interests first - a socialist programme. Join the Socialist Party to fight for that.

Do you agree?

**JOIN THE SOCIALISTS**

[socialistparty.org.uk/join](http://socialistparty.org.uk/join)



- Stop the war in Ukraine. Withdraw Russian troops and end the bombing
- No to ethnic division and cleansing. For workers' unity, and self-determination and full democratic rights for all minorities
- Visa-free travel for those fleeing the war and the right to asylum. No to racist immigration laws
- Homes and services for all: take the wealth off the oligarchs and all the 1%. Workers mustn't pay the price for the economic consequences of war
- No trust in any capitalist politicians. For the building of mass workers' parties to oppose war and represent working-class interests, not the bosses
- Fight for a socialist alternative to war and capitalism

WHAT WE STAND FOR: THE SOCIALIST PARTY'S MAIN DEMANDS >>> see column on p11



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ISSN 1366-9621